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ABSTRACT

An evaluation was done of the New York City Public Schools' Alternative Basic Comprehensive Program (Project ABC). Project ABC operated at 2 high schools in the Bronx (Christopher Columbus High School and Walton High School) and served limited English proficient (LEP) students, 227 in the fall and 286 in the spring of the 1990-91 school year. The program was designed for bilingual high school students in schools with an influx of newly arrived immigrant students from many countries. Project ABC provided LEP students with instruction in English as a Second Language and native language arts in content area subjects and developed student and parent awareness of career resources and opportunities. The evaluation was conducted using student and director questionnaires, test scores, and interviews. Evaluation findings indicate that the program was well integrated into the two sites as the principals were heavily involved. The project met its objectives for dropout rate and instruction in social studies. Site resource specialists suggested that a family worker was needed to make home visits throughout the project. Project ABC compensated for small staff with several types of communications to parents. An appendix describes the data collection and analysis procedures. (JB)

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ED346219

OREA Report

Alternative Basic Comprehensive Program
(Project A.B.C.)
Grant Number: T003E0074

1990-91

FINAL EVALUATION PROFILE

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Alternative Basic Comprehensive Program
(Project A.B.C.)
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1990-91

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7/26/91

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This report has been prepared by the Bilingual, Multicultural, and Early Childhood Evaluation Unit of the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.

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FOREWORD

The body of this report is preceded by an Extract which presents an overview of salient points of the project: funding cycle; enrollment figures; background of students served; admission criteria; and programming features, strengths, and limitations, including the outcome of all objectives. The extract also presents the conclusions drawn by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) about the program and its recommendations for program improvement.

The extract is followed by the body of the report, titled Program Assessment. This includes such information as staffing, program implementation, and outcome and implementation objectives. Instructional objectives are presented first, followed by noninstructional objectives. The report then addresses those aspects of programming mandated by Title VII regulations that do not have specifically stated objectives. This may be information on attendance and dropout rate, grade retention, mainstreaming, referrals out of the program to meet special needs of the students, and withdrawals. A case history concludes the report.

Data for this profile were collected and analyzed using a variety of procedures, which are described in Appendix A following the text.

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
New York City Public Schools

E.S.E.A Title VII Evaluation Profile

Alternative Basic Comprehensive Program (Project A.B.C.)

Grant Number: T003E0074
1990-91

EXTRACT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Julia Sanchez

FUNDING CYCLE : Year 1 of 3

SITES

School	Borough	Enrollment* (fall)	Enrollment* (spring)
Christopher Columbus High School	Bronx	117	176
Walton High School	Bronx	110	110

*The project enrolled 309 students, serving 227 in the fall and 286 in the spring.

STUDENT BACKGROUND

Native Language		Number of Students
Spanish		54
Vietnamese		37
Khmer		31
Korean		31
Chinese		25
	Mandarin 9	
	Cantonese 15	
	Other 1	
Russian		21
Arabic		16
Farsi		13
Other Languages		81

Countries of Origin	Number of Students
Vietnam	42
Dominican Republic	33
Cambodia	31
Korea	31
U.S.S.R.	21
Puerto Rico	15
China	12
Iran	13
Arabic-speaking countries	16
Other countries	95

Mean Years of Education in Native Country: 7.4; in the United States: 2.7

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free Lunch Program: 84.5

Estimated Percentage of Students Lacking Literacy Skills in Native Language: 20

Some students, particularly those from Vietnam and Cambodia, lived with relatives or friends because their parents had not yet arrived in this country. Most of the students in the project had had their education interrupted or had attended school infrequently within native country. They tended to take the less challenging subjects and avoided the technical fields like mathematics and science.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

The project admitted students who scored at or below the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) and were thus classified as being of limited English proficiency (LEP). The project also relied on teacher recommendations, data obtained from student records, parent interviews, and personal interviews of students. Top priority was given to newly arrived students with the greatest need.

PROGRAMMING

Features

Alternative Basic Comprehensive Program (Project A.B.C.) was a special program for bilingual high school students in New York City. The program targeted two high schools with an influx of newly arrived immigrant students from many countries. The program provided LEP students with instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) and Native Language Arts (N.L.A.) in content area subjects, and it developed student and parent awareness of career resources and opportunities.

Strengths and Limitations

The program was well integrated into the two high school sites as the two principals were heavily involved. Counseling by teachers and guidance counselors assisted students and parents to adjust to the school and environment. One-on-one tutoring, during school hours and after school, and peer tutoring in English and N.L.A. improved student performance. Students proficient in a particular subject led other students in cooperative learning in the classroom.

Site resource specialists suggested that a family worker was needed to make home visits. The project compensated for the lack of such a staff member by communicating with parents by telephone, letter, and newsletter and by establishing a network of parents to share news about the project's activities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project A.B.C. was fully implemented. Intensive instruction was provided in E.S.L. and in N.L.A.-based content areas. The project met its objectives for dropout rate. It met its objective for E.S.L.-based content area instruction in social studies only. The objective for attendance was met at one of two sites. Because the project did not provide the necessary data, OREA was unable to evaluate objectives for career education, occupational aspirations, student internships, staff development, curriculum development, and parental involvement.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Provide necessary data so that all objectives can be evaluated.
- Select or develop instruments where needed for evaluation.
- Identify ways in which to meet the objective for attendance at Christopher Columbus High School.
- Identify ways in which to meet the E.S.L.-based content area objectives for mathematics and science.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

STAFFING

Title VII Staff (Total 5)

Title	Degree	Language Competencies	Title VII Funding
Project Director	M. A.	Spanish	Part time
Resource Specialist	M. D.	Vietnamese	Full time
Resource Specialist	M. S.	Vietnamese	Part time
Paraprofessional		Vietnamese	Full time
Paraprofessional		Khmer	Full time

All staff were certified in areas they served.

Other Staff Working With Project Students (Total 48)

Degree		Certification	
B.A.	1	Mathematics (T.P.D.)	2
B.S.	1	French (T.P.D.)	1
M.A.	35	Spanish	11
M.S.	10	E.S.L. (T.P.D.)	2
Ph.D.	1	E.S.L.	9
		English	5
		Reading	1
		Italian	2
		Biology	2
		General Science (T.P.D.)	1
		Social Studies	4
		Bilingual Social Studies	1
		Mathematics	3
		French	1
		General Science	1
		Chemistry	2

Teaching/Communicative Proficiencies (TP/CP)*	
Chinese	TP 1
Spanish	TP 19, CP 1
Vietnamese	TP 2
French	unreported
Italian	unreported

IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES (Objectives prefaced by •)

The project offered informal peer tutoring and formal staff tutoring, a curriculum sequence of career education and exploration, an extended school day with flexible pacing and competency based assessment, the use of E.S.L. methodology in content area curricula through participation in an integrated Learning Center, and opportunities for students to enroll in college courses and receive both high school and college credit.

E.S.L.-Based Content Areas

Teachers used the Holt texts in general science, physical science, human biology, zoology, and chemistry. The resource specialists used hands-on activities in teach chemistry and biology. They made presentations and modeled what students had to do and made presentations.

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*Teaching Proficiency (TP): Competent to teach in this language.
Communicative Proficiency (CP): Conversational capability only.

For social studies, teachers used the textbooks Exploring World History, Global Studies and American History. The teachers presented new vocabulary before teaching the lesson. Students engaged in group and independent work.

Teachers used the textbooks Fundamental Mathematics, and Sequential Mathematics Course II and III for mathematics classes. The resource teachers used workbooks and prior examinations to prepare the students for the Regents Competency Test (R.C.T.).

- At least 70 percent of the students enrolled in all E.S.L.-based content area classes (science, social studies, mathematics) will score at or above the passing criterion of 65.

Evaluation Indicator: Final course grades.

Passing Grades in Content Area Courses

	Fall		Spring	
	Total Number	Percentage	Total Number	Percentage
Mathematics	171	62.0	226	58.8
Science	162	63.0	186	58.6
Social studies	152	77.0	228	76.3

Project met objective only for social studies.

Career Education

- The program will organize at least one career conference for students in which eight major career clusters will present career options.

Evaluation Indicator: Program records.

The project did not provide the data necessary to evaluate this objective.

OREA could not evaluate objective.

Occupational Aspirations

- Seventy-five percent of participating students will show significant improvement in occupational aspiration.

Evaluation Indicator: Maier Occupational Aspiration Scale.

The test does not exist, therefore the project did not provide the data necessary to evaluate this objective.

OREA could not evaluate objective.

Student Internships

- The curriculum/resource specialist will have developed student apprenticeships/internships at 15 or more new sites.

Evaluation Indicator: Program records.

The project did not provide the data necessary to evaluate this objective.

OREA could not evaluate objective.

Attendance

- Student attendance will be significantly higher than that of mainstream students.

Evaluation Indicator: Attendance records.

The resource specialists reviewed the attendance lists daily and contacted parents by telephone or letter. The school sent attendance cards to the parents on a weekly basis and explained attendance procedures to them in their native language.

Attendance Rate

School	Project Students' Rate	Mainstream Students' Rate	Difference
Christopher Columbus High School	76.5	79.1	-.2.6
Walton High School	90.9	76.9	14.0*

*$p<.05$

Project met objective at Walton High School only.

Dropout Rate

- Program students will have a significantly lower dropout rate than similar non-program students.

Evaluation Instrument: Program and school records.

Dropout Rate

School	Project Students' Rate	Mainstream Students' Rate	Difference
Christopher Columbus High School	0.0	8.1	- 8.1*
Walton High School	4.7	10.4	-5.7*

*$p<.05$

Project met objective.

Staff Development

- Eighty-five percent of staff members will participate in 90 percent of the teacher training conferences and workshops.

The project did not provide the data necessary to evaluate this objective.

OREA could not evaluate objective.

Curriculum Development

- By the end of the first project year, the curriculum/resource specialist will have developed four subject-matter oriented instructional units for teaching mathematics, science, and social studies.

Evaluation Indicator: Program records.

The project did not provide the data necessary to evaluate this objective.

OREA could not evaluate objective.

- By the end of the first project year, the curriculum specialist will have developed E.S.L.-based curriculum guides in at least one career cluster.

Evaluation Indicator: Program records.

The project did not provide the data necessary to evaluate this objective.

OREA could not evaluate objective.

Parental Involvement

- The proportion of program students' parents who participate in Open School Day/Evening will be equal to or greater than the proportion of mainstream students' parents.

Evaluation Indicator: Program records.

The project did not provide the data necessary to evaluate this objective.

OREA could not evaluate objective.

Other Activities

The project bilingual resource room provided services to students and parents. The resource room staff monitored cooperative learning and group discussions in five different languages. The room also functioned as a family room for parents who visited it often and learned about the school program, the curriculum, college and career opportunities, and the community. There were also many opportunities for the students, parents, and members of the community to share cultural experiences.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL ACADEMIC NEEDS

	Number of Students	Percentage
Referred to special education:	0	0
Referred to remedial programs:	0	0
Referred to gifted and talented programs:	25	8.1
Retained in grade:	19	6.1

The guidance counselors, one of whom was fluent in Spanish, met with newly-arrived students to determine their academic and social needs. They recommended students for peer tutoring, particularly in the content areas. The counselors advised students who had special emotional problems, family problems, behavior problems, or attendance problems.

MAINSTREAMING

One student (0.3 percent of participants) was mainstreamed.

Academic Achievement of Former Project Students in Mainstream

This was the first year of the program, so there could be no data on this.

CASE HISTORIES

H. came to America from Korea in June of 1990. She could not understand her teachers and classmates even though she had studied English in high school in Korea for two years. She came to the A.B.C. program resource room for help every day during her lunch period. She used the computer as an aid in learning English, especially for reading and grammar. An English-speaking paraprofessional helped her with her pronunciation. She did her homework in mathematics, science, chemistry, and social studies in English, assisted by the teacher and paraprofessional. After the first term, her English improved so much that she received good grades in all of her subjects. She did so well that her E.S.L. teacher moved her from E.S.L. 2 to E.S.L. 4. She was also recommended for the gifted program with the Beta Academy.

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Student Data Form

This one-page form is filled out by staff for each participating and mainstreamed student. OREA gathers data from this form on backgrounds, demographics, academic outcomes, attendance, referrals, and exit from the program.

Project Director's Questionnaire

The Project Director's Questionnaire includes questions on staff qualifications, program implementation, periods of instruction, and instructional materials and techniques.

Project Director's Interview

The interview gathers information on program and student or staff characteristics not supplied by the Project Director's Questionnaire. The interview also allows project staff to offer qualitative data or amplify responses to the Questionnaire.

Citywide Test Scores

OREA retrieves scores centrally from the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) and other citywide tests. For evaluation purposes, these test scores are reported in Normal Curve Equivalents (N.C.E.s). N.C.E.s are normalized standard scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation (s.d.) of 21.06. They constitute an equal-interval scale in which the distance is the same between any two adjacent scores. A gain of 5 N.C.E.s is the same whether it is at the lower or the higher end of the scale. N.C.E.s can be used in arithmetic computations to indicate group progress. (Percentile scales, although more familiar to many, are unsuitable for such computations since they are not equal-interval.)

Likert-Type Surveys

Likert-type surveys, in which respondents mark their opinions on a scale from one to five, are used in a variety of ways. They examine student attitudes (i.e., toward school and career, native language use, and native and mainstream cultures). They also assess staff and parent attitude and reactions to workshops and other activities.

Gap Reduction Evaluation Design

OREA uses a gap reduction design for measuring changes in standardized tests. Since no appropriate non-project comparison group is available in New York City, where all students of limited English proficiency (LEP) are entitled to receive supplementary services, OREA compares the progress of participating students with that of the group on which the test was normed. It is assumed that the norm group would show a zero gain in the absence of instruction, and gains made by project students could be attributed to project services. (See "Citywide Test Scores" above.)

To test whether pre/posttest gains are greater than could be expected by chance alone, OREA uses a *t*-test. To determine whether a difference between two proportions (e.g., program and mainstream attendance rates) is greater than could be expected by chance, OREA uses a *z*-test. The level of significance is set at .05 for all tests.